

4 November 1953

FIRST TRIENNIAL PROGRESS REPORT OF THE WATCH COMMITTEE

December 1950 - November 1953

I. AUTHORITY FOR THE WATCH COMMITTEE

A. Authority. The Intelligence Advisory Committee (IAC) in the meeting of 7 December 1950 decided that the Joint Intelligence Indications Committee (JIIC) should thereafter function as the Watch Committee of the IAC. Terms of Reference for the Watch Committee, which had been circulated to the IAC members by the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Department of the Army, under date of 20 December 1950, were approved without change by the IAC in the meeting of 28 December 1950 (Appendix A). The subsequent rescission by the JIC of its action of 8 August 1950 in creating the JIIC was purely administrative formality since all members of the JIC had been present and assenting as members of the IAC when the latter converted the JIIC into the Watch Committee.

The mission of the Watch Committee, according to the Terms of Reference, is to collect, evaluate, analyze, and report indications of Soviet-Communist intentions of hostile action.

B. Historical Background. The Joint Intelligence Indications Committee, which was converted into the Watch Committee by the 7 December 1950 action of the IAC, originated as a G-2 Intelligence Indications File Committee. Representatives of Navy and Air Force intelligence had been full participants in the activities of the latter Committee for several months, when on 8 August 1950 the Joint Intelligence Committee decided that thereafter the Intelligence Indications File Committee would function as the Joint Intelligence Indications Committee (JIIC). The JIC at the same time invited representatives of CIA, State, and FBI to participate in the meetings, which they did thenceforth. This evolution from a G-2 committee into an IAC committee explains why the chairmanship, the secretariat, and the place of the meeting have been in G-2. The personnel of the secretariat initially were furnished entirely by the Army but since January 1952 the secretariat has been staffed by personnel from CIA, Navy and Air Force as well as Army.

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II. ORGANIZATION AND OPERATING PROCEDURES OF THE WATCH COMMITTEE

A. Organization. The Watch Committee consists of the Committee itself and a full-time Secretariat which furnishes the Committee with the necessary staff and secretarial support.

1. The Watch Committee consists of representatives of all the members of the IAC. The Army representative, the Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, has also been the Chairman. In accordance with a provision of the Terms of Reference, which was intended to provide the Watch Committee meetings with the necessary expert opinion from the numerous fields of intelligence specialization, each agency is represented by as many individuals at Watch Committee meetings as the agency considers necessary for adequate analysis of the indications under consideration. Each agency, however, designates a senior representative who acts as the spokesman for his agency on decisions relating to substantive intelligence and on administrative matters. The Watch Committee representation has been noteworthy both for its stature and lengthy tenure. The high level in their own respective agencies of the Watch Committee's senior representatives and their service on the Committee for long periods have been conducive to both effectiveness and continuity in the Committee's operations.

2. The Secretariat consists of five persons from CIA, Army, Navy and Air Force. The Secretariat Chief is an Army lieutenant colonel. The Secretariat is located in the area of G2/DA, and is organized so as to carry out its functions of

- (a) collecting and filing indications cards,
- (b) making the necessary preparations for regular and special meetings,
- (c) preparing the drafts and coordinating the review of Watch Committee reports, and
- (d) providing necessary secretarial assistance to the Watch Committee.

B. Procedures. The procedures of the Watch Committee are organized around its threefold mission of collecting, evaluating and analyzing, and reporting indications of Soviet-Communist intentions of

hostile action. The Watch Committee in session is naturally the focal point of all the operational procedures of the Committee and its Secretariat. But since the Watch Committee does not and cannot direct the collection and dissemination of indications by the participating agencies, especially with respect to the commands and other US Government installations outside Washington, the procedures of the Committee have been designed to act as a stimulus and guide to the early warning activities of US intelligence agencies throughout the world. Appendix B is a diagram of the operational procedures of the Committee.

1. The collection activities of the Watch Committee as such are confined to bringing together in the Secretariat the indications available in Washington. However, the participating members of the Committee, acting in their individual capacity, systematically screen indications out of their incoming flow of information for delivery to the Watch Committee Secretariat. The Secretariat assists this process of screening out indications by the individual agencies, as well as it can, by screening practically all the pertinent intelligence messages and reports received in Washington. The Secretariat upon receiving a possible indication requests a tentative evaluation and analysis from the agency in whose field of dominant interest the indication lies. The individual members of the Watch Committee also follow a policy of keeping their respective collection facilities in the field continually informed as to the standing and special requirements for indications of Soviet-Communist intentions of hostile action. The special requirements may manifest themselves initially either in Watch Committee meetings or in the Watch activities of the participating agencies.

2. The Watch Committee's procedures for the evaluation and analysis of hostilities indications involve a preliminary and tentative analysis of each indication by the most qualified member agency. The final evaluation and analysis are by the Watch Committee itself, but naturally, since the initial or tentative evaluation and analysis are by the principal specialists in the particular field of intelligence concerned, the first analysis is as a rule the last. In actual practice, there are usually three phases through which indications pass in the course of evaluation and analysis. The first is the evaluation and analysis of the desk specialist; the second is consideration of the indication by the affected intelligence agency itself; and the third and last is the evaluation and analysis by the Watch Committee in session.

Theoretically, the mechanics of the evaluation and analysis procedures are as follows. The indication is tentatively evaluated and

analyzed by the agency of dominant interest, and an indications card is forwarded to the Watch Committee Secretariat. The latter, the day before a scheduled meeting, prepares a tentative check list of indications which appear deserving of consideration by the Watch Committee and circulates the list to the member agencies for comment and recommended changes. The check list, with any coordinated changes, then becomes the agenda for the Watch Committee meeting. The custom has grown up in nearly all the member agencies of holding preliminary meetings for the purpose of crystallizing individual agency opinion on the current indications, individually and collectively. Thus, it can probably be said truly, that at the meeting of the Watch Committee, all the intelligence resources of the Federal Government are brought to bear concertedly on the problem of evaluating and analyzing current and past indications of Soviet-Communist intentions of hostile action. In actual practice, the theory of this procedure is not always observed with respect to the first step of transmitting a tentative analysis of indications to the Secretariat. The participating agencies have shown an increasing tendency to defer sending the indications cards to the Secretariat until either the day before or the day of the meeting. Frequently, the verbal analysis of the indication at the Watch Committee meeting itself is the only specific comment the Secretariat is able to garner.

3. The reporting of hostilities indications by the Watch Committee has been chiefly through the reports of its meetings. These reports, which are the basis of a wide range of oral and written intelligence reports by the participating agencies, are reproduced by G-2/DA for delivery to the Watch Committee members who carry out the further distribution within their own respective agencies. From a total of 113 copies in December 1950, the distribution has grown to 225 copies currently. The present type, paper and format are much superior to those in use at the end of 1950. Impetus to the improvement came initially from word that former President Truman had complained of difficulty in reading the report. The reports of the meetings are prepared by the Watch Committee Secretariat from the indications cards, written statements by the agency concerned of the analysis of indications delivered orally at the meetings, and remarks recorded by the secretary during the meeting. The conclusions are always carefully worded and agreed to at the meetings. The weekly meetings are customarily held on Wednesday morning. Draft copies of the report are distributed to the participating agencies around ten o'clock the following morning. Each agency receives as many copies of the draft as desired, so that there will be a minimum of time consumed in review by all those concerned. Concurrence or recommended changes are telephoned by the individual agencies to the Secretariat by 1200 hours. An effort is made by the Secretariat to

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complete the coordination of the recommended changes by 1400 hours. Most of the changes are of a minor editorial nature, but occasionally a recommended change presents a real test of the Secretariat's coordinating skill. Incidentally, it is an interesting fact that a split opinion, which is authorized by the Terms of Reference in order not to delay the distribution of the report, has never yet appeared in a Watch Committee Report. When all the changes have been consolidated by the Secretariat, the draft of the report is reviewed finally by the Chairman of the Committee to affirm that everyone's views as he understands them are correctly presented. The draft is then prepared for reproduction, and is ready for distribution to the member agencies early Friday morning, less than 48 hours after the meeting began at 1000 hours on Wednesday.

The distribution of the draft report Thursday morning, with the revision completed shortly thereafter, makes it possible for high level US planners and policy makers in Washington and throughout the world to receive the gist of the report even before its publication. Several of the participating agencies, for example, brief their key figures on the contents of the report either on Thursday or early Friday morning. The JINTSUM, the Joint Intelligence weekly cable to major US commands and installations worldwide, which is dispatched every Thursday carries a summary of the Watch Committee Report of the previous day's meeting.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE WATCH COMMITTEE

The Watch Committee's mission of collecting, evaluating, analyzing, and reporting indications of Soviet-Communist intentions of hostile action has been carried out to a very large extent through the organizations of the member agencies. This was to be expected since the thinking behind the Committee's creation visualized that the Committee would be largely the motivating and guiding force for a worldwide intelligence warning system operating through the coordinated efforts of all US intelligence agencies.

A. As indicated above in the description of collection procedures, the Watch Committee in carrying out that part of its mission relating to the collection of hostilities indications has through the participating members exerted a strong influence upon the worldwide collection activities of US intelligence agencies. The individual members have exerted this influence through both communications and personal visits to the field. It should also be borne in mind that the Committee's operations, particularly as reflected in its weekly and special reports, have tended to focus attention

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on the urgent necessity of an adequate early intelligence warning system. Increasing recognition of this necessity has, in turn, acted as a stimulus to systematic efforts by US field agencies to collect indications of Soviet-Communist preparations for an attack.

25X1C The assembly or collection of indications by the Watch Committee Secretariat has included periodic analytical summaries of indications by similar committees in the principal US commands overseas. The weekly report of the [REDACTED] analysis of hostilities indications is also received regularly by the Watch Committee Secretariat for distribution to the Committee members.

B. The Watch Committee's progress in evaluating and analyzing hostilities indications is embodied in the reports of the weekly meetings. Since 1 January 1952 an index to the contents of the Watch Committee Reports has been published semi-annually. In addition to meeting once a week since its establishment as an IAC Committee, the Watch Committee held five emergency meetings in 1951, and one in 1952. There is an SOP for the summoning of the Watch Committee in an emergency, and upon call the Committee can be quickly assembled at any time.

C. The Watch Committee responsibility for reporting indications of hostile action has been accomplished by means of the reports of the meetings. Since further reporting to the organizations of the Watch Committee members is the responsibility of the individual members, the reporting responsibility of the Watch Committee ends with the delivery of the report to the member agencies. However, the Watch Committee has made every effort to prepare the report in such form and by such procedures as would facilitate the rapid and efficient distribution of the main points and conclusions of the Watch Committee discussions.

IV. MAJOR PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Watch Committee are, naturally, the successful accomplishment of its mission of collecting, evaluating, and analyzing indications of Soviet-Communist intentions of hostile action for the purpose of providing adequate early intelligence warning in the event any such attack should actually ever materialize. The effectiveness with which the Watch Committee is organized and operating for the accomplishment of its

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mission can only be finally demonstrated with the occurrence of such an attack. * The problems of the Watch Committee are accordingly identical with its objective as set forth in its mission. Hence, the problems of the Watch Committee aside from the continuing analysis and reporting of current indications involve a diligent and ceaseless search for those methods of indications collection, analysis and reporting which will insure an optimum chance of successful detection of an impending attack.

Search for solutions to these problems have recently included a visit of the Watch Committee on 21-22 August 1953 to the Air Defense and Army Anti-Aircraft Commands at Colorado Springs at the Commands' invitation, a recommendation on 15 September 1953 by the Chairman of the Watch Committee to the IAC that a Watch Committee Indications Center be established as the nerve center of a worldwide intelligence early warning system, and the creation by the IAC on 6 October 1953 of a committee to examine the Watch Committee's over-all organization and operations to determine whether they can be improved.

A. The problem of maximum efficiency in the worldwide collection of hostilities indications involves:

1. the determination of the actions which would presumably precede a Soviet, Communist attack,
2. the establishment of intelligence capabilities for the collection of indications of the necessary preliminaries to an attack, and
3. the establishment of thoroughly coordinated and tested procedures which will insure prompt and efficient transmission and processing of collected indications at all stages from collection in the field to analysis by the Watch Committee in Washington.

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* To date, of course, there has been no attack, and therefore no opportunity to test the effectiveness of the US intelligence early warning system which centers in the Watch Committee of the IAC. The invasion of South Korea by the Communists cannot be regarded as such a test, since the Watch Committee at the time of the invasion was not organized and operating as at present. The Communist invasion of South Korea demonstrated the vital need of an intelligence early warning system.

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B. There is general agreement that techniques and procedures for evaluating and analyzing indications should be carefully planned, and that fully as important as the determination of the most effective techniques and procedures for processing, maintaining, and interpreting indications is the wholehearted collaboration of all the participating agencies in adhering to the prescribed procedures.

C. In the area of reporting, there appears to be the vitally important problem of insuring that in the event of an actually impending attack the Watch Committee deliberations will be communicated with an irreducible loss of time to the IAC and the JCS. The reporting mission of the Watch Committee also requires the establishment of direct liaison between the Watch Committee and command warning systems.

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